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ABSTRACT

This guide contains materials for use in replicating a model day-long program designed to foster communication among local-level economic development groups, education, business and industry, and political systems. The model was implemented in 1983 in two regions of Indiana under the name Dialog Day. The first section of the manual describes the rationale, conception, and implementation of the Dialog Day Program by the Indiana State Advisory Council on Vocational Education. Discussed next are the following phases of Dialog Day development and implementation: getting started (creating and sharing a vision, leadership, enrollment); starting over (creating a shared vision, membership, tools, additional members); structuring the event (initial structuring, maintaining a focus, structuring the agenda, establishing a date and location for Dialog Day); recruiting and enrolling participants; practicing and handling the final details (materials, roles, rehearsal); and conducting follow-up activities (indicators of impact, next steps, development of a summary). A project summary concludes the guide. Appendixes to the handbook include a checklist of preconditions for collaboration, a sample letter to prospective participants, a Dialog Day checklist, tips for facilitating a Dialog Day, and a Dialog Day feedback form. (MN)

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A DIALOG DAY MODEL AND GUIDE

INDIANA COUNCIL
on
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
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AUGUST, 1985

This Dialog Day Model and Guide was developed under a contract with the Indiana Council on Vocational Education, State of Indiana, in cooperation with New Educational Directions, Inc.

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Purpose:

In September, 1984 and March, 1985, as a result of the Dialog Project sponsored by the Indiana State Advisory Council on Vocational Education, a Dialog Day around work related education/training and economic development was held in each of two regions of the State of Indiana. The purpose of this document is to describe a model based on Project experience which can be used by other regions in the State of Indiana for developing and implementing such a Dialog Day.

Background:

The Indiana State Advisory Council on Vocational Education is mandated by State and Federal legislation to advise the State Board of Vocational and Technical Education in its formulation of statewide vocational education policy, plans and programs. The membership of the Council collectively represents a broad spectrum of interests, occupational educational backgrounds, and in-state geographic locations.

In 1983, Governor Orr extended a invitation for Council advice on ways vocational education can continue to enhance the economic development opportunities for Indiana. The Council accepting its mandates and responding to this opportunity to become partners and advocates on matters relating to vocational education and economic development within the State of Indiana, developed and implemented the Dialog Day Project as one of the ways in which to respond to this opportunity. The purpose of this project, eventually implemented in two regions of the state, was to expand the infrastructure communication among local level economic development groups, local education, business and industry, and political systems. It was intended that in the two regions where the project was implemented, there would be both expanded interpersonal relationships within the infrastructure and a heightened awareness for vocational institutions' ability to meet local training needs. Further, it was also intended that as a result of the Dialog Project, a Dialog project guide would be developed for use in other communities so that other communities would benefit from the experience of the two regions in which this effort was piloted. The purpose of this report, therefore, is to provide an overview of the project and a description of the steps involved in structuring and implementing this Dialog Project.

The Need:

In compiling its 1983 Annual Report, the Indiana State Advisory Council on Vocational Education requested input from counselors, teachers, employers and the public at large. Throughout this process was heard expressed a common theme: the need for expanded communication among those groups throughout the state that interface around the areas of economic development and vocational education. (1)

In a public hearing held in January, 1983, the State Advisory Council on Vocational Education heard testimony around the question "How can Indiana

Vocational Education better serve the student and employers?" Testimony largely supported the belief that Vocational Education is viewed an important part of Indiana's economic development. Employer needs around job skills are changing rapidly. The challenge of vocational education will be to keep abreast of employers' needs and to remain an integral resource to supporting the goals of economic/community development efforts in each local area. Expanding the effectiveness and responsiveness of vocational education, however, requires more collaboration between all agencies, schools, counselors, business, parents and students. Regional dialog through the development and implementation of Regional Dialog Days as described in this document can be utilized as a positive approach to encourage the necessary communication and cooperation at all levels.

Sites:

The first Dialog Project was developed for the West Central area of the state, a largely rural, agricultural based area. The regional area of focus defined by the steering committee and described as the Wabash Valley area, included Clay, Greene, Parke, Putnam, Sullivan, Vermillion and Vigo counties with Terre Haute serving as the geographical focal point.

The second Dialog Project was developed for the Northwest Area of Indiana. The regional area of focus defined by the steering committee included Lake, Porter and LaPorte counties and was labelled by the steering committee throughout the project as the Northwest Indiana Area. This area includes heavily industrialized, urbanized and densely populated areas as well as more sparsely populated rural and agricultural based areas. While the two project areas are distinctly different from one another in terms of infrastructure, population density and economic development concerns and goals, the activities involved in structuring the actual Dialog Days themselves were designed to facilitate the implementation of effective dialog events appropriate to the specific infrastructure communication needs of each local area.

DIALOG DAY MODEL AND GUIDE

What is Dialog? As defined in Webster's New World Dictionary, dialog is the "open and frank discussion of ideas, as in seeking mutual understanding." Dialog is required in any effort where collaboration is intended among various groups for the purposes of reaching a common goal.

In this effort, collaboration around economic development and work related education "means the sharing of responsibility for the education and training of people so that ultimately people are educated and trained to lead fulfilling lives for themselves and are productive within a shared society." (2) In the process of engaging in dialog about shared concerns, information about resources is exchanged, turf issues and stereotypes are broken down and relationships are initiated. Dialog is the seed of true partnerships and continued dialog is the water of effective collaboration.

Project Structure:

The results of the Dialog Project were two Dialog Days developed and implemented in two regional areas of the state distinctly different in terms of demographics and geography. As envisioned from the outset of this effort, each of the resulting Dialog Days was to be an event directed from the local level through a local steering committee. Ideally this steering committee was to be comprised of individuals representing those groups involved in that area's work related education/training and economic development efforts. The purpose of the Dialog Project was to expand relationships among those involved in education systems and local development efforts. The questions to be addressed as well as those who were invited to participate in the Dialog Day were to be determined by the steering committee and based on local needs.

The approach envisioned for the Dialog Day grew out of the successful State Advisory Council on Vocational Education sponsored round table discussions held throughout Indiana with counselors and business leaders. The approach suggested for this Dialog Project utilized a series of roundtable discussions during which time the invited participants would address the identified topics/questions. A member of the State Advisory Council on Vocational Education was to be present at each roundtable to listen and to record the group's discussion of each topic.

A lunch was to be provided for the Dialog Day participants and this as well as all other expenses connected with the development of the Dialog Day were to be handled through the project. Further, the project provided each area with a consultant/facilitator to support the development of each local effort. It was understood that this consultant, utilizing the experience of the two project pilot sites, would also develop a Dialog Day Model which could be applied elsewhere in the state.

A very similar process was utilized to facilitate the development of the Dialog Day in both sites, although the resulting structure of the Dialog Days themselves was different in each site. Overall, the experience in the two areas indicates that this process can be replicated in any geographical area if specific key steps, and principles are followed in the development of the Dialog Day effort.

Guidelines to Developing a Dialog:

On one level developing and implementing a Dialog Day Project is a relatively simple task requiring many of the same activities involved in planning and developing a well organized conference. However, bringing key representatives together to develop a Dialog Day requires the facilitation and nurturance of dialog during the planning process. In its simplest terms, the development and implementation of a successful Dialog Project regardless of the focus and the topic, requires the application of two key principles throughout the process. These are:

1. Keeping the focus of the discussions on needs, resources, and outcomes and what we can do about these both in the development of the Dialog Day and during the Dialog Day itself;

2. Gathering the "right" people together to talk about the "right questions.

While these principles may appear so general they would be difficult to actually apply, experiences, observations and learnings from the pilot sites indicate otherwise. The following guide provides an overview of the phases observed in the development of both project sites as well as those activities, tools and processes which appear to support the application of these principles and the purpose of the effort.

PHASE I - GETTING STARTED

A. Creating and Sharing a Vision:

As when undertaking any effort that requires a great investment of time, energy and money, the first step involves envisioning the real benefits that will result from the effort. In the case of the Project Dialogs, the State Advisory Council on Vocational Education took this first step by envisioning the benefits and results that would be available for regional areas and for the State in the area of work related education/training and economic development through the development of a Dialog Project and a Model for Dialog. When the possible benefits of such an effort had been clearly identified by the State Advisory Council on Vocational Education, a meeting was held with two individuals identified as local leadership. The purpose of this initial meeting was both to share and to enroll these individuals in this vision.

Initiating a similar effort on the local level may appear difficult. It may appear that points of view exist within your region about what is possible and what is impossible. While it may appear that these viewpoints preclude Dialog, the described approach can nevertheless be utilized. The first step is to: a) envision and clarify the results and benefits available for your group, and for all groups who would be involved in the effort; b) identify the individuals/groups who would also be most likely also to want these benefits; c) identify representative leadership from these groups; c) through personal contact, share your ideas/vision with these individuals/groups; d) enroll them in your vision.

One tool which is extremely helpful at this point for assessing the readiness of groups to engage in dialog is the checklist "Preconditions for Collaboration." (3) This checklist will provide information about how individuals perceive current conditions. These perceptions can either enable or roadblock such a project. This information can then be used to develop a strategy for enrolling others in the effort. Further, completing this checklist during one of the first steering committee meetings will provide the committee members with information they too can use when enrolling others in the effort. (This checklist has been included as Appendix A.)

B. Leadership:

In selecting the "right" leadership, other important competencies observed to be shared by leaders in general, provide further possible selection criteria:

Management of attention:	having a vision for the future, a sense of purpose and intended results and communicating these with an intense focus of commitment.
Management of meaning:	the ability to communicate and to use language in such a way as to make the vision, purpose, and outcomes real and tangible so that others can support them.
Management of trust:	able to be counted on, behaving with persistence, constancy, and focus.
Management of self:	awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses, ability to nurture and develop one's own strengths and skills, ability to nurture a positive attitude in others and willingness to take risks. (4)

C. Enrollment:

Enrollment is defined in Webster's New World Dictionary as "enlistment or the act of becoming a member." Throughout a successful Dialog Project, individuals and groups are being continually enrolled in the vision of those results that can occur when people engage in "open and frank discussion for seeking mutual understanding". This process obviously takes time and requires a willingness to make personal contact with others.

In the exploratory meetings held during this pilot project with the two selected leaders of the area, enrollment into the Dialog project began when the individuals themselves began to identify the needs of their region, their community and especially their own organizations around work related education/training, and economic development. In other words, at this point in the process, individuals should be developing their own vision of the possibilities available through the dialog process. When individuals begin to identify the benefits available to them through participating in the

Dialog project, a commitment to explore the possibility of participation soon follows.

At this point in the exploration phase, each individual is asked to identify a list of other individuals who would also benefit from this effort and who would provide the leadership necessary to develop and implement the project. After establishing a meeting date, time and place, the identified individuals are sent a letter describing the project and requestes their participation as members of the Dialog Day Project Steering Committee.

While sending a letter is a necessary first step in the invitation process, it was observed during this phase and throughout the entire project, that personal contact by phone or in person is an integral piece of the enrollment process. Personal contact continually produced more frequent participation.

Summary:

1. Envision the benefits of participation for yourself and others.
2. Assess the preconditions for collaboration.
3. Identify leadership who would also benefit.
4. Share your vision with this leadership.
5. Encourage this leadership to identify their own needs and benefits available through their participation.
6. Identify with the leadership those groups who share common needs and who would benefit from participation.
7. Send a letter which describes the project and invites participation to key representatives (leadership) from the identified groups. (A sample letter has been included as Appendix B.)
8. Personally contact the invited individuals by phone or in person to complete the enrollment process.
9. Provide a pre-meeting reminder call 2-3 days prior to the meeting.

PHASE II - STARTING OVER: (Meeting 1 - 2)

A. Creating a Shared Vision:

Your first meeting of the steering committee for the most part can be viewed as an expanded version of the exploratory meeting(s). Once again, it will be necessary (this time as a group) for the steering committee to continue creating a shared vision through: 1) identification of benefits; 2) assessment of preconditions; 3) identification of individual, organizational, and regional needs around the general topic area (in this case work related education/ training and economic development).

B. Membership, Trust and Synergy:

Sufficient time should be allotted at this first meeting for everyone in this new group to get to know one another. In the beginning stages of a group, it is extremely important for each person to develop membership with and trust of the group. Individuals who feel a part of the group are more likely to participate and be committed to the effort. Trust among individuals in the group supports honesty, openness and risk taking. These contribute to the development of synergy (we can do more together than any one of us can do alone). Therefore, application of the following principles and values both in the beginning stages of the group and throughout the group's work together will support the effective development of shared leadership and teamwork within your steering committee:

- o Mutual high regard among those individuals involved in this effort is necessary and important.
- o Common identification with one another and the task is necessary and important.
- o Productive communication is necessary and important.
- o The desire to work together is necessary and important.
- o An environment of neutrality is necessary and important.

Establishing mutually agreed upon groundrules based on these principles is one structured method for facilitating the development of membership and trust within your group.

C. Tools:

An agenda provided at each meeting with a clearly stated purpose will serve to keep the group on focus. Recording the results of the preconditions assessment and the identified needs on newsprint will provide a focal point for discussion, prevent unnecessary repetition and serve as a group memory. Further, the information recorded on newsprint is readily available then to incorporate in the meeting summary. The needs identified and recorded at this time also serve the purpose of providing a transition into actually structuring the Dialog Day by framing the identified needs as possible questions to consider at the Dialog Day.

D. Additional Members:

Additional steering committee members should be identified at this first meeting. There is a strong possibility that a key group(s) or individual(s) may have been overlooked in the initial identification process. After defining the geographical area of focus and all the groups who will be invited, utilize the resources of the group to identify and enroll additional leadership. Again, if additional membership is identified, a letter followed by personal contact will increase the likelihood of that individual's participation in the effort. Prior to the end of the meeting, establish the next meeting date, time and place.

Summary:

1. Focus on developing membership and trust among your steering committee members.

2. Provide ample opportunity for people to get to know one another.

3. Provide an agenda for this meeting and each following meeting.

4. Provide a list for everyone of those individuals invited to this meeting.

5. Share the envisioned benefits of participation in the effort; encourage others to identify benefits of participation.

6. Provide an overview of the general process.

7. Begin to identify the geographical area of focus.

8. Identify collective needs and concerns around focus of effort.

9. Identify additional required leadership and clearly identify how these individuals will be invited and who will do it.

10. Establish the next meeting time, date and place.

11. Summarize the meeting and send this summary out to all who attended the meeting, those invited who did not attend, and those identified as additional steering committee members. Throughout the project continue sending a summary to all members after each meeting.

12. Provide reminder phone calls 2-3 days prior to the next meeting, and all meetings.

Note: To keep track of everything, make an index card for each individual as they are identified to be on the steering committee. Including their name, title, address and phone number on this card will aid greatly in the telephoning and mailing that is involved in this project.

PHASE III - STRUCTURING THE EVENT: (Meetings 2 - 4)

A. Initial Structuring:

In both project sites, 8-9 steering committee meetings were held during the duration of the project. Expect dialog about needs, benefits, and outcomes to continue throughout the next three meetings or so as the steering committee is developing the actual structure of Dialog Day.

It is important, however, that your group begins to structure the Dialog Day around the second and no later than the third steering committee meeting. Those leaders who have been enrolled as steering committee members are most likely action and results oriented, and therefore may get impatient and believe they are wasting their time unless they perceive that the group is making progress toward reaching the concrete goal of producing the Dialog Day.

The identification of topics and questions to be addressed during the Dialog Day is often the first step in the development of the agenda. At the second meeting, those needs identified during the first meeting can be reframed as potential questions to be addressed during the Dialog Day. Identifying the general themes around these questions also serves to support the development of the Dialog Day structure:.

The following provides an example of how this reframing occurs:

Need: There is a need to identify and communicate to students what will be needed to keep a job in the future.

Question(s): What must we do to identify what is needed to keep a job in the future?

How can we get employers to tell us what is needed to keep a job in the future?

How do we communicate to students what will be needed to keep a job in the future?

Open-ended dialog questions which ask "how" or "what" are much more effective in creating dialog than those questions that ask "why." The former tends to promote description and problem solving; the latter tends to encourage justification and defensiveness.

In both Dialog efforts these general themes became topic areas around which the structure for the day was developed.

B. Maintain the Focus:

As the Dialog Day is being structured and throughout the entire project, it is important to identify and focus on those activities which will support the process of dialog.

Traditionally, large conferences and meetings have tended to use a one-way process of communication where the invited participants typically sit and listen while the speaker talks at them. Presentations, speeches, summaries and panel discussions fall into this category. The process of dialog rarely occurs during this type of communication situation nor does dialog generally occur during questions and answer sessions.

A strong tendency to want to fill the agenda with these traditional one-way communication activities was observed at both sites. This tendency could indicate that the idea of "just talking" at a conference is a relatively unfamiliar approach. The continued recurrence of this tendency throughout the project might underscore the need to notice if this is happening in your group. If so, it is important to maintain a constant emphasis on your initial purpose as the agenda is being developed. ("Open and frank discussion of ideas for mutual understanding").

The development of dialog requires environmental support as well. In other words, your plans should include that at the Dialog Day individuals will be seated in small groups of no more than 8-10 persons per group. Ideally,

individuals should be seated around round tables; this allows everyone to make eye contact with almost everyone else in the small group. In structuring the Dialog Day, the steering committee will want to periodically rotate individuals into new small groups during the Dialog Day. This re-grouping provides participants expanded opportunity to develop relationships with more than one small group of individuals. Coding name tags with room numbers and/or table numbers prior to the Dialog Day greatly facilitates this rotation process. Each time a regrouping occurs, however, it is important that ample time be provided for individuals to make introductions as well as discuss the dialog topic.

C. Structuring the Agenda:

In order to develop ownership of the Dialog Day, your entire steering committee must have an opportunity to provide input about the actual structure of the Dialog Day. Project experience has shown, however, that developing the entire agenda with the committee as a whole can become quite cumbersome and frustrating.

To avoid this probability, first provide the entire committee an opportunity to consider key questions about the day, make suggestions and develop a general idea of how the day might look. After this initial development has been completed, form a two-three person subcommittee to "flesh-out" a tentative agenda for the Day. This tentative agenda should include details such as the logistics of the Day, tasks to be completed during the Day, the various roles that people will play in the implementation of the Day and a description of materials required for the Day.

If this approach is utilized, it is important for this subcommittee to realize that they are developing a tentative agenda subject to committee review and modification. Further, it is also important that a deadline be established and followed for completion of this task as many of the next step decisions will be based on this agenda.

The following is a list of key questions that the entire committee will want to address before the subcommittee goes to work:

1. What do we want to accomplish during the Dialog Day?

2. What will be our theme for the Day?

3. Who should provide the keynote address? What information/ content should be included in this keynote? When should the keynote address be scheduled (at the beginning of the day, or at lunch)?

4. Do we want other guest speaker(s)? (e.g. Invocation at lunch.) Who do we want? What do we want them to communicate? When during the Day should those speaker(s) be scheduled?

5. What dialog topics could be addressed during the Day?

6. How many people ideally should attend the Dialog Day?

7. Should we keep all groups in one large room or should we use breakout rooms?

8. Approximately how many regroupings should occur?

D. Establishing a Date and Location for the Dialog Day:

Ideally, the date for the Dialog Day should be established around the third or fourth steering committee meeting and at least 2-2½ months prior to the day when the Dialog will be held. This will provide enough time to develop and print registration/publication brochures, send letters, develop publicity plans, and enrollment strategies, and make personal contact with invited participants.

Prior to actually scheduling the Dialog Day, it is important to have a clear idea or vision, if you will, of the actual event itself as well as a general ballpark idea of when you want to hold the event. This picture of what the day should look like, will in large part, determine what you look for when selecting a site for the Dialog Day. Before selecting a location for the Day, for example, it is necessary to know the approximate number of intended participants. This will indicate how much space will be needed. Further, it is important to have a clear idea of the structure of the day so that a location can be identified which will most clearly fit the needs of your envisioned structure. For example, one Dialog Day might require only one large room; another might require a large room and several small rooms.

Identifying as much information as possible about the Dialog Day prior to looking for a location will ensure the best possible fit between your envisioned event and the location. Most hotels which provide meeting room space have a staff person who will work with a steering committee representative in making arrangements for the Dialog Day. The clearer you are, however, about your needs, the more likely you will be to end up with exactly what you want. After identifying a location that meets your requirements and fits your budget, identify with your hotel contact person the dates when this space is available within your general timeframe.

In order to avoid scheduling conflicts, prior to actually scheduling the Dialog Day, each committee member should also check their personal calendars and the calendars of the groups they represent and intend to invite, e.g., school calendars, community calendars, business calendars, conference schedules, etc. It will be necessary at this point to juggle between the availability of the location and those dates that do not present conflicts.

Summary:

1. Continue to encourage participation and investment on the part of all steering committee members.

2. Determine the questions to consider during the Dialog Day.

3. Use the committee to provide overall structure for a subcommittee to develop the details of the agenda.

4. Pay attention to possible scheduling conflicts before establishing a date for the Dialog Day.

5. Have a clear idea of what the Dialog Day will look before finding a location. Choose an environment which is most conducive to your chosen structure.

6. At this point it is important to begin defining tasks, delegating tasks, and establishing clear deadlines for completion of tasks. Follow up with individuals about task completion if necessary.

Note: Continue pre-meeting phone calls; follow up as soon as possible after the meeting with individuals who do not attend. Update these individuals about the meeting they missed and communicate that their participation is very important to the success of the effort. If it appears that their investment in the effort is lessening, use the opportunity to dialog about the project and get feedback about the project. If there are concerns, it is possible that others are experiencing the same concerns as well. Use the feedback.

PHASE IV - RECRUITMENT/ENROLLMENT: (Meetings 5 - 7)

While the topic and tasks around participant recruitment usually surface around the fifth meeting of the steering committee, in actuality, your Dialog Day participant recruitment process begins at the moment the first local leadership is enrolled in the project. The recruitment process then continues throughout the enrollment of the steering committee members. As observed in this project and in numerous other projects where participant recruitment was involved, the recruitment strategy that produces the most results is that process previously described as enrollment.

As one can see, this enrollment process utilizes a networking approach where identified individuals are personally contacted. Again, enrollment occurs in this personal contact through the sharing of the envisioned and real benefits which are available for the invited individual through participation in the Dialog event. The individual who would best be able to express the envisioned benefits of participation, to a businessperson, for example, would be another businessperson. The individual who would be most likely to enroll a representative from government would be another individual who represents government. Thus if the intention has been identified from the outset to create a Dialog with business, industry, government and education, make sure these groups are well represented on the steering committee from the beginning of the project. A description of the actual recruitment process is included in the Dialog Day checklist. (See Appendix C).

Once again, ensuring the participation of the "right" people (those who interface with the needs, resources and outcomes of the dialog focus) requires planning and enrollment from the beginning of the Project. The likelihood of achieving the desired level of participation and representation at the Dialog Day through mass mailings, printed letters, media and publicity is virtually non-existent. The money invested in such activities would be better spent elsewhere. Planning and personal contact will produce greater results.

Summary:

1. Recruitment of Dialog Day participants begins with selection of committee members. These individuals should represent the groups who will be invited to the Dialog Day and should be considered leaders within their groups.

2. A networking enrollment strategy produces far more results than traditional recruitment procedures such as mass mailing.

PHASE V - PRACTICING AND HANDLING THE FINAL DETAILS: (Meetings 7 - 9)

At this point in the project, enrollment efforts should be well under way. Printed brochures have been mailed and individuals have been or are being personally contacted and enrolled by steering committee members.

A. Materials:

The identified structure of the Dialog Day will determine the tasks, and roles as well as materials required to implement the Dialog Day. A packet of materials for each participating individual should be developed. This packet should minimally include:

1) A list of participants which includes addresses and phone numbers. This information encourages the continuation of networking and relationship building long after the Dialog Day has been held.

2) A descriptive agenda, stating the purpose and intended outcomes as well as the times and place of the various activities.

3) A map if necessary.

4) An evaluation form to be completed by the participants and returned before they leave.

5) Other materials identified as necessary to support the structure of the day.

The packet cover can be plain or it can be imprinted with the same design or logo used on the registration brochure. (Printing can be relatively inexpensive if handled through an area vocational school.)

B. Roles:

As was said, the roles individuals play and tasks they do are determined by the structure of the agenda. It is desirable, however, to plan on having at least one individual from the steering committee at each table to facilitate the small discussion. (see Tips on Facilitation - Appendix D) If this is not possible, a facilitator for each table should be identified and assigned this task prior to the Dialog Day. (Few individuals like the surprise of being asked to do this at the final hour.) If there are enough individuals on the steering committee to "go around," a second steering committee member can be placed at each table and play the role of recorder. If not, a participant can be asked to do this. (Since it is a much less active role, most people don't mind being asked to play recorder at the last minute.)

C. Rehearsal:

During the last meeting of the Wabash Valley Area Dialog Day, for example, topic group leaders were provided an opportunity to meet with their small group facilitators for a "run through" session. Written materials were developed to

provide direction for these individuals. If your Dialog Day involves activities which would benefit from rehearsal, it is important to have a rehearsal session. Most individuals feel more comfortable doing a new task if they have had the opportunity to practice and rehearse. This same holds true for the role of facilitator. If an individual(s) has not performed in this role, hold a facilitator practice session during the last meeting.

Summary:

1. Effective implementation of the Dialog Day requires planning organization, and attention to details such as logistics, tasks, materials and roles.

2. Prior to the Dialog Day, the steering committee should "think through" the Dialog Day and provide time for a "dress" rehearsal during which time individuals can practice their roles.

PHASE VI - FOLLOW-UP

A. Indicators of Impact:

As has been stated, dialog is the necessary first step towards developing more structured collaborative efforts in any community. Further, continued dialog is an essential ingredient of any collaborative effort regardless of the duration, structure or intended outcomes of the collaborative effort.

While concrete and measurable long-range outcomes resulting from the Dialog Day may not be evident for months or even years after the Dialog Day has been implemented, possible indicators of impact have been identified through the project. These indicators of impact can be used by the steering committee in three ways:

1. to establish goals for the Dialog Day;

2. to evaluate the quality of effort after the Dialog Day (intended results versus actual results);

3. to diagnose areas which will require further attention when planning follow-up activities.

Most effective leaders set goals for themselves and want to know if and when they have reached their goals. Building in a process for project evaluation contributes to expanding the level of commitment and sense of purpose in the project.

The following is a list (though not exhaustive) of possible indicators of impact.

Enrollment:

- o representation of desired groups on committee and at the Dialog Day;

- o percent of no-shows at the Dialog Day;

- o percent of those invited versus those attending the Dialog Day;
- o percent of those attending versus those expected.

Presence of Dialog:

- o observed level of energy and enthusiasm among participants during the Dialog Day;
- o amount of time provided during the day for one-way versus two-way communication;
- o opportunity for initiating relationships (How many different people did each person meet during the structured dialog process?);
- o written or verbal indications of willingness to continue dialog effort after the Dialog Day.

Structure of Day:

- o relevance of speaker to local needs and concerns;
- o overall organization of day, e.g. materials, logistics, completion of required tasks.

Level of Steering Committee Investment and Commitment:

- o attendance at meetings and at Dialog Day;
- o follow-through and completion of tasks;
- o level of participation in discussions and planning;
- o use of positive language about the effort (belief in probability of success);
- o number of other scheduled events found to be in conflict with Dialog Day;
- o turfism issues that may have created barriers to dialog within the steering committee and ultimately to achieving the desired results during the Dialog Day itself.

While the above list is by no means exhaustive, it does provide an overview of those areas both in development and implementation of the Dialog Day which will impact the overall quality of the intended results. Further, these indicators and others identified by the Committee can be used to develop an evaluation form. (A sample evaluation form has been included as Appendix E.)

B. Next Steps:

After each of the Dialog Day, a follow-up steering committee meeting was held. Although each of the project committees produced different results (in

terms of desired participation, representation and opportunity for dialog), participant feedback at both sites indicated the following:

1) The need for continued dialog.

2) An expanded awareness of other groups' needs.

After discussing and evaluating the overall effort, each steering committee also identified the need to continue the steering committee in some form as a leadership group. Further, one of the activities considered by each steering committee for continuation of the effort at each site was further participation in the "Indiana Partners in Education" project. This program was judged by both committees as able to support continuing dialog and more structured collaborative efforts between education, business and industry. At this time, one further meeting of the steering committee has been held at one of the sites. However, specific plans for the continuation of the effort have not yet been identified at either site.

The natural tendency of a group is to move towards disintegration unless it continues to set goals and move ahead. This tendency underscores the need to establish clear goals around this effort as soon as possible after the Dialog Day.

Summary:

1. Looking at and evaluating the process and product of the steering committee can provide valuable information about what needs to happen next in order for dialog to continue among those groups invited to the Dialog Day.

2. Evaluation of an effort provides useful information about how to improve and/or modify future efforts;

3. While long-range impact of the Dialog Day cannot be immediately assessed, a number of indicators of impact can be identified and used to evaluate the quality of the effort.

PROJECT SUMMARY:

As was stated, in order to achieve the results intended through the Dialog Day, it is necessary to apply the following key principles:

1. Keeping the focus of the discussions on needs, concerns and what we can do about these both in the development of the Dialog Day and during the dialog itself; and

2. Gathering the "right" people together from an area to talk about the right questions.

Vigilant application of principle number one has been observed to support the development of trust, openness, and risk taking, both within the steering committee and during the Dialog Day itself. Further, project experience also indicates that selecting the appropriate leadership for membership on the steering committee is critical to achieving the intended results. This leadership must represent the identified dialog groups, must believe in the

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probability of success, and must be able to communicate this belief to others. While this model's approach to developing the Dialog Day may serve to expand this belief, there is some question as to whether such an effort can be successfully completed if the majority of the steering committee members secretly or overtly believe that dialog cannot be achieved.

While it is possible for a community to initiate, develop and implement the Dialog Day independently, the use of a neutral, outside facilitator probably expands the potential for developing a successful Dialog Day. A neutral, outside individual is not bound up in the stories or history of the area and/or the current relationships among the groups. Further, in this project, this individual also served as a resource to the group in making suggestions, providing meeting summaries, handling personal phone contact with the Steering Committee prior to each meeting, developing various support materials and handling other logistical support activities. This support seems to enable the Steering Committee to focus often limited time and energy on the tasks only they can do. Personal phone contact prior to meetings also seems to serve the very important purpose of communicating the importance of participation and attendance at the meetings.

Regardless of whether an outside neutral party is utilized in this project, it does seem important that one person be responsible for and able to provide this developmental support.

In conclusion, the Dialog Day model provides an effective first step in developing mutual understanding among individuals and the groups they represent. In turn, this mutual understanding can lead to expanded creativity in problem solving, less duplication of efforts, improved delivery of services and use of resources. Together, we are able to obtain results well beyond what each of us can do seperately.

While undertaking such an effort will undoubtedly present various and unique challenges for those individuals choosing to embark upon such an adventure, the opportunities and benefits available through such an effort are limitless and bound only by the restrictions we place on ourselves and others. This guide provides a framework for developing and implementing a Dialog Day Project in your community. The next step is up to you.

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PRECONDITIONS FOR COLLABORATION

	Intact - exists at this time	Partially intact - we're working on it	Partially intact, but needs more work	Does not exist in our group; we need to develop it
1. Acceptance and Support of the collaboration by Administrators and leaders				
2. Recognition of Potential Gain from Collaboration				
3. Belief in the Probability of Success				
4. Willingness to Invest Time				
5. Willingness to Invest Money				
6. Recognition of Mutual or Compatible Goals				
7. Willingness to Cooperate				
8. Willingness to Compromise and/or Change				
9. Recognition that it takes Time to Develop Collaboration				

Sample Letter

Date

Name

Dear :

(What):
This year the Indiana State Advisory Council on Vocational Education is sponsoring several pilot dialog projects throughout the State of Indiana and has selected the West Central/greater Terre Haute area as one of the possible dialog sites. Coordination of this dialog project will be provided through New Educational Directions, Inc., currently under contract to the State Advisory Council on Vocational Education.

(Purpose of Project):
The overall purpose of these dialogs is to expand the communication among the various development groups in local areas, specifically those focused on education delivery systems. As a result of these dialogs it is intended that there will be both expanded interpersonal relationships among those involved in the development of the economy and local educational delivery systems as well as a heightened awareness for vocational institutions' ability to meet local training needs.

(Purpose of Committee):
As you know from your active and important participation in the West Central/greater Terre Haute area, a number of community, economic and education development efforts are currently underway in your area. As an identified key leader in these activities, you are invited to contribute to the development of this dialog project through membership on the dialog steering committee. The purpose of this committee will be to provide input and direction for this dialog. The format of the dialog will be based on learnings from previous successful activities implemented by the State Advisory Council on Vocational Education.

(Outcomes):
Further, it is intended that these initial dialog efforts will provide the basis for developing a model for dialog which can be implemented in other communities throughout Indiana. Thus, through your participation in this event, your community and eventually other Indiana communities will benefit.

(Time and Place of First Meeting):
The first meeting of the dialog steering committee will be held on Monday, May 14 from 9:30 a.m. until noon at The Indiana Vocational Technical College in Terre Haute, Room ____.

(Tasks of Steering Committee Member):
As a steering committee member you will be asked to provide direction and input around the following areas:

1. What topics, issues, questions should and could be addressed during a ½ to 1 day long dialog event to achieve the desired outcomes?

2. What results will be obtained through this event?

3. What material and human resouces should be made available for the participants in the dialog day, e.g. speakers, experts, reports, etc.

4. What length would be appropriate for such an event (½ or full day)?

5. What specific geographic area should be the focus of this event?

6. Who should be invited to participate in the dialog?

7. How should participants be recruited?

(Information about Sponsoring Organization):
Through its sponsorship, the Indiana State Advisory Council on Vocational Education will provide for those expenses connected with the development and implementation of this dialog project. Enclosed you will find a pamphlet describing the State Advisory Council on Vocational Education.

(Contact Persons):
As the dialog project director, I am available to provide you with further information about this project and to answer any questions you might have. Please feel free either to call me at (phone number) or if you wish, (name) at (phone number).

Again, your input and participation are necessary to insure the success of this effort. I look forward to meeting you and working with you on this effort.

Sincerely,

Name,_____
Organization

cc:

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Checklist for Dialog Day

I. Additional Steering Committee Members:
- __ Identify further necessary committee members;
- __ Reach agreement on how to recruit these members, who will recruit, and by when this will be accomplished.

II. Workshop Agenda, Roles and Tasks:
- __ Reach agreement on format of dialog day, time frames;
- __ Reach agreement on roles and tasks involved in day, e.g., topic group leaders, facilitators;
- __ Make assignments on roles;
- __ Determine deadline(s) around completion of any assignments;
- __ Set aside time in committee meeting to review flow of the day;
- __ Set aside time in committee meeting to answer questions about facilitation of groups and have a dress rehearsal.

III. Workshop Materials:
- __ Identify materials for Dialog Day, e.g., packet materials, worksheets, evaluation materials;
- __ Determine who will be responsible for what materials;
- __ Determine timelines for development of materials;

IV. Speakers:
- __ Identify needed speakers, e.g., keynoter, luncheon speaker, invocation;
- __ Identify who is going to invite speakers;
- __ Determine direction for each speaker;
- __ Identify who will write the invitation to the speaker including the identification direction;
- __ Identify who will introduce speaker and what will be said in introduction;
- __ Identify who will write thank you to speaker.

V. Publicity:
- __ Identify who should be responsible for coordinating the development of the brochure;
- __ Identify what the brochure should say, how it should look, etc.;
- __ Identify who should print brochure;
- __ Should brochures be disseminated?
- __ Identify a plan for the dissemination of the brochures;

VI. Media Coverage:
- __ Identify specifically how this event is newsworthy;
- __ Identify what kind of media coverage should be pursued;
- __ Identify who will be responsible for coordinating media coverage;
- __ What kind of post-event media coverage should be pursued?

VII. Evaluation:
- __ Identify what you want to know about the impact of the Dialog Day;
- __ Identify what should be addressed in the follow-up meeting;
- __ Identify your indicators of success for this effort;
- __ Identify whatever else must be done in order to ensure success.

VIII. Enrollment:

__ Identify number of intended participants;
__ Determine criteria for participants based on intended outcome (e.g., geography, representation);
__ Reach agreement on enrollment process;
__ Make agreements around tasks and deadlines involved with enrollment process;

NOTE: the method which seems to be the most effective in enrolling the intended participants is the following:

A. Groups:
1. determine targeted groups that fit criteria;
2. identify key leaders and decision makers who need to provide support;
3. identify who should make personal contact with key leader;
4. make personal contact requesting support of key leader, participation of key leader (if appropriate) and support for participation of targeted individuals within targeted group;
5. determine with key individual how others from that targeted group should be contacted and enrolled;
6. follow-up with letter to individual
7. follow-up with phone calls if registration brochures from specified individuals are not returned by deadline - emphasize importance.

B. Individuals:
1. determine individuals who fit criteria;
2. identify who should make personal contact with individual;
3. make personal contact with individual;
4. send them registration brochure;
5. follow-up with phone call if registration brochure is not returned by deadline.

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TIPS OF FACILITATING*

There is no one right way to facilitate. Much depends on your personality, the situation, and the nature of the people in your group. Your role is to:

1. get the group to focus on the task;
2. protect group members and ensure that everyone participates;
3. remain neutral; and
4. foster an environment for group trust building.

Suggestions oh how to do these things:

1. Clearly state your role as one of remaining neutral and non-evaluative. Ask others in group to help you stay in this role.
2. Aid group in identifying how they are going to deal with a task--for example:
   - brainstorm
   - taking turns sharing information
3. Make sure that all members are constantly clear about what's "what" and what's "how". If there is confusion, stop and clear it up.
4. Energize the group when it becomes sluggish. Try humor, a building block, a "stretch" break. Empathize with your group and try to stay on the same wave length.
5. Backtrack and summarize "what" and "how" when group gets stuck.
6. Be positive and encouraging. Compliment the group when a task is finished or they are working effectively.
7. Make sure each member has equal opportunity to be heard and is protected from personal attack.
8. Protect the group from anyone's domination. As facilitator you can try to take the focus and floor away from individual (if dominating) by interrupting and saying, "Thanks ____, now what do you think, _____?"
9. If destructive arguments start, try to get individuals to focus their energy on solving the problems rather than attacking one another.
10. To ensure a positive environment, ask participants to say first what they like about an idea before starting a negative concern.
11. Regulate traffic.
12. If asked for your opinion, restate your neutrality. If you must offer your opinion, clearly state you are stepping out of your role as facilitator to do it. It is okay to step out of your facilitator role when:

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- the level of trust in a group is high and there is a genuine interest in your participantion;

- the meeting is very small (three or four people) and you are an essential part of the team;

- the problem with which the group is dealing is in an area of your own special expertise and you are asked for advice.

13. Admit your mistakes.

If you acknowledge from the outset that you're not infallible, the group will empathize with you. Being honest and good-humored about not having all the answers builds up your credibility with the group. If you make a mistake, be the first to admit and correct it: "Wait a minute--I forgot something. We should make sure everyone agrees there's really a problem concerning this issue before we spend time trying to solve it." Try to beat your critics to the punch. Demonstrate that you're wide awake--even to the point of being the first to criticize yourself if you do something dumb.

* adapted from: Doyle, M., and Strauss, D., How To Make Meetings Work, Playboy Press, Chicago, 1976.

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DIALOG DAY
FEEDBACK FORM

APPENDIX E

I am from ☐ Business ☐ Government ☐ Education

I. OVERALL WORKSHOP

1. To what degree do you feel the Dialog Day accomplished its stated goals?

__ extremely well __ well __ average __poorly __nil

Comments:

2. Do you expect the Dialog Day to influence your practices in the future?

__ yes, a great deal __ very little

__ yes, some __ no

Comments:

3. How well did the various parts of the Dialog Day fit together and make sense for you?

__ extremely well __ well __ average __poorly __nil

Comments:

4. Please check the statement(s) which describe your reaction to the Dialog:

__ a. It provided me with a lot of usable skills or ideas new to me.
__ b. It provided me with a much better understanding of how to establish or maintain working relationships.
__ c. It gave me a chance to make valuable new contacts.
__ d. It was "inspirational", giving me a professional "pick-me-up".
__ e. It was primarily a waste of time for me.
__ f. Other (please state) _____
_____

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5. What aspect of the Dialog Day did you find MOST interesting or helpful?

6. How do you intend for the Dialog Day to influence your future practices?

7. Please note any specific topics which you feel should have given more attention at the Dialog Day.

8. What other suggestions do you have for improving future events such as this Dialog Day?

9. What future activities would you like to see as outcome of this Dialog Day?

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4. Warren Bennis, "The Four Competencies of Leadership." Training and Development Journal, August, 1984.

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